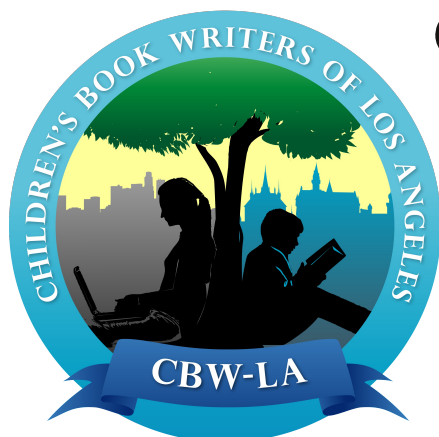


# SCRIBBLERS' SCOOP

Volume III Number 1



## Children's Book Writers of Los Angeles

Educating and Inspiring Writers on the Road to Publication

Come Socialize!



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## Letter from the Editor

Dear Scribblers,

Welcome to the first edition of the 2014 CBW-LA Scribblers' Scoop! It's been a while since we last communicated via newsletter, but boy, have we been busy around the club. In October of last year, we published our first anthology, titled Story Sprouts. Nineteen CBW-LA members and fans workshopped in June to create their pieces, and then Nutschell and I spent the summer and fall assembling, editing, writing and prepping for publication. The result is a writer's resource and anthology that we are very proud of. At the same time, we know that as your editors and workshop leaders, we can always do more, bigger, better things, and we're pumped for Story Sprouts 2014! With all new exercises, this year we will expand on the work we did last year and release an incredible book.

Scribblers' Scoop is the non-profit CBW-LA's newsletter.

Available to the public, it is published quarterly in February, May, August, and November.

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We highly encourage you to sign up for the Writing Day on May 31 - early bird discount through April 1 - and get published this Fall. There will be breakfast, lunch, networking, lots of writing, some fun freebies - and a full day of inspiration and excitement.

This newsletter is chock full of information about Story Sprouts, but we also asked members questions about goal setting and writing quirks, which you will not want to miss! We also

included a few writing tips and some board notes. Next quarter, keep your eyes open for a return to the great columns and articles by our Scribblers' Scoop reporters and contributors! Last but not least, a giant thanks to CBW-LA Secretary Lucy Ravitch for taking care of the newsletter layout design! You rock. If you'd like to join the newsletter team or have any tips for stories you think we'd like, please email me: [alana@cbw-la.org](mailto:alana@cbw-la.org). I'd love to hear from you. Write on!

~Alana Garrigues

## President's Letter

March 2014

Dear Scribblers,

How time has flown! We're now in the first quarter of a new year and so much has happened since our last newsletter. As of this writing, we have 67 registered CBW-LA members who found us through their online search and through word of mouth. We are very thankful for each and every one of you!

We've had some wonderful workshops and guest speakers. Here's a quick overview of the highlights. To view more information about the workshops mentioned below, please visit [www.cbw-la.org](http://www.cbw-la.org) and click on "Blog."

In May, YA/NA author Samantha Combs (SPELLBOUND SERIES) facilitated a fun and informative Blurbs, Queries & Loglines: Oh My! workshop. She took attendees through the different steps in creating each one of these important tools in the writer's arsenal.





In June we held our inaugural Writing Day Anthology workshop! Complete with writing tips, story prompts, handouts, food and socializing, attendees spent a whole day immersed in a creative atmosphere. Their goal - and ultimate accomplishment - was to create two pieces each for STORY SPROUTS, the first CBW-LA Anthology. It was a great success, and we plan to continue the Writing Day Anthology tradition annually! (Join us May 31 to create Volume 2 - early bird discount through April 1!)



July was all about getting ready for submission. YA author Carmen Rodrigues (34 PIECES OF YOU) hosted Writing Between the Lines: The Power of Multiple Revisions. She took us through the revision process, giving us various tips and techniques on how to turn our first draft into the final product. And, to help members with their queries, we held the first CBW-LA Query Critique Session as well.

In August, renowned author Reece Michaelson and top screenwriting consultant and author Pamela Jaye Smith joined us. They facilitated a workshop entitled Potent World-Making: What's Myth Got to Do With It? The authors gave techniques on how to create imaginative worlds using the power of mythology using their co-authored novel PETRA VOLARE SCROLL 1: FROM THE SHADOWS as an example.



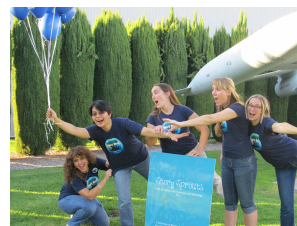
September was all about younger readers, beginning with a Picture Book/Early Readers and Chapter Books Critique Session, and ending with The Write Stuff: A Children's Picture Book Workshop facilitated by author Cassandra Black (TWINKLE: THE ONLY FIREFLY WHO COULDN'T LIGHT UP). Cassandra shared wonderful tips on how to spark ideas for picture books, and how to market them once published.

October marked our first Nonfiction and Memoir Critique Session. Then, on October 29, we launched our \*BIGGEST ACHIEVEMENT\* to date: our very first digital and



print publication. STORY SPROUTS: CBW-LA WRITING DAY ANTHOLOGY AND EXERCISES was the result of the June Anthology Workshop and four months of hard work.

In line with this wonderful accomplishment, we held a party the beginning of November. During this Year-End Celebration and Anthology Launch Party, anthology authors hosted a book signing and celebrated their individual and collective achievement with good food, a STORY SPROUTS cake and much fanfare.



And to wrap up 2013, we had one final Middle Grade and Young Adult Critique Session in November.

Phew! Tired yet? And that was just the second half of the year!

This year, we've already had two wonderful events.

In January, we held our third annual Kickstart Your Writing Career workshop. Attendees learned about the different publishing options and came away with worksheets, handouts and templates to get their career plan started. This January, Alana and I also shared writing tips and publishing techniques during our month-long STORY SPROUTS Blog Tour. You can find a list of our blog hosts and read our articles here:



<http://www.storysproutsanthology.com/the-story-sprouts-january-2014-blog-tour/>



Then in February, MG author Kristen Kittscher (THE WIG IN THE WINDOW) hosted the Honing Your Middle Grade Voice workshop, complete with lots of laughter, discussion and writing prompts. She told us about the essential elements of a middle grade voice, including the wonder, curiosity and confusion children that age face, and helped us tap into our inner pre-teen.



We have more wonderful events planned for you this year, starting with Novel Writing Bootcamp on March 29, followed by the 2nd Annual Writing Day Anthology Workshop on May 31. For registration details, check out our [www.cbw-la.org](http://www.cbw-la.org) website.

Your continued attendance and enthusiastic support for the group are much appreciated. I thank you for every little thing you do to help us improve and promote CBW-LA, whether it's signing up for our workshops, spreading the word to other writers you might meet, or leaving group reviews and workshop comments on our Meetup page.

We will continue to grow and expand our programs thanks to you. We are blessed to have you as part of our wonderful writing family.

Happy Writing,

Nutschell Anne Windsor  
CBW-LA President



## CBW-LA Board Notes

**Meet Sibylla Nash**, our newest CBW-LA board member! She joins us as the group's new Herald, a.k.a. Publicity Chair.



Sibylla Nash is an author and freelance writer. A graduate of USC with a degree in print journalism, her work has appeared in a variety of magazines, and newspapers including Essence, Vibe, The Chicago Tribune and others. She has written two novels Bumped and DreamCity. Sibylla is also the author of Baby Modeling & Beyond: From the Stroller to the Red Carpet, where she draws upon her experience as a mother of the young actress, Kortney Nash, to help parents navigate a career for their children in the entertainment industry.

## MOVING ON UP: From Meetup to CBW-LA

Chances are, you've noticed space is getting a little tight over at Meetup, and you're probably wondering why. Midway through last year, we started to encourage everyone to register for events at cbw-la.org. It eases accounting and attendance questions to have it all at one place. Plus, once we achieved non-profit status, we wanted to settle into our own professional space.

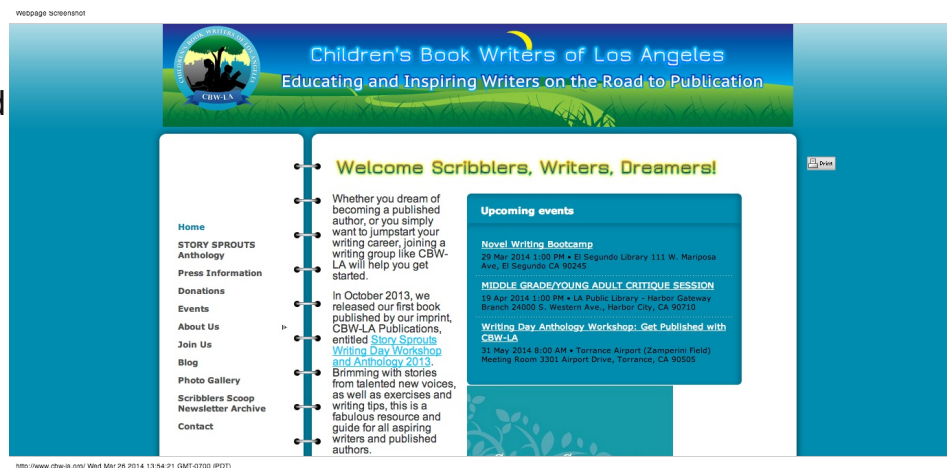
We still love meeting new members through Meetup, and think that the site offers a valuable service, but it doesn't fit as well with our non-profit membership model.



The board has unanimously decided to maintain a presence on Meetup, but this year we will complete our transition away from event posting on that platform. We realize the wait list has been more confusing than helpful to some of you, and we want to ease that confusion.

You are welcome to hang on to your Meetup account to get notified about CBW-LA events, which we will continue to blast over email, but please visit cbw-la.org directly to register and see our upcoming calendar of events.

While you're there, we encourage you to sign up for annual membership and get your full benefit out of the club. Membership not only gives you discount prices to events, and free critique groups - it shows public support of our mission, shows agents and editors that you're serious about writing, and helps



CBW-LA cover administrative costs. The entire board is composed of volunteers, but it still requires some financial resources above and beyond our event fees to maintain a web presence and run the organization.

Thank you for your support through this transition!

~Your CBW-LA Board



## CBW-LA Pays it Forward for a Charitable Cause

When Super Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines last November, it devastated a large portion of the country's southern region. It was a tragedy that hit too close to home for two of our CBW-LA board members - I was born and raised in the Philippines and Marketing Manager Angie Flores is married to a Filipino man with many cousins and family members still living on the island nation.

In light of the storm's destructive power, and in honor of our close ties to the country, we decided to donate 50% of our Story Sprouts book sales proceeds from November 2013 to January 2014 to help with the relief efforts.

In line with our passion as children's book writers, we elected to send our donation to Child Fund International. At the end of the January, we donated \$64.37 to support the organization's continuing efforts to help the children affected by the super typhoon.

We would like to thank all those who purchased a copy during those three months. Sixty dollars may not seem like a lot, but it goes a long way towards helping people who are still struggling to survive in the wake of the storm. From the bottom of our hearts (most especially mine), thank you again.

Warmest Regards,  
Nutschell Anne Windsor  
CBW-LA Founder and President

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Register on-line today! [CBW-LA.org](http://CBW-LA.org) (or click on the links below)

Saturday, March 29th 1-4 PM Novel Writing Bootcamp

Saturday, April 19th 1-4 PM MG/YA Critique Group

Saturday, May 31st 8AM-5:30PM Writing Day Workshop!

## ALL ABOUT STORY SPROUTS

Many of you may have heard about last year's Writing Day Workshop and Story Sprouts through the grapevine, and wondered:

What is Story Sprouts?

What did the writers do during the workshop?

Could I do it too? (The answer? YES! Everyone can participate and get published.)

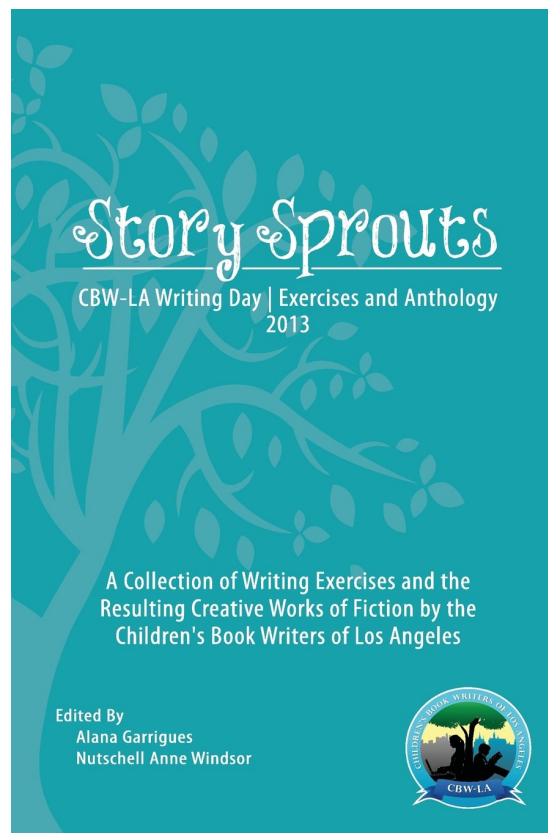
Here's the press release that announced the Story Sprouts release to the ether.

### Contributing Authors Create Submissions During One-Day Writing Workshop, Included in Book

Torrance, CA – This summer, 19 talented children's book authors accepted a challenge to workshop, write, revise, polish, and submit two stories - in public, under the pressure of a six-hour deadline, with the promise of publication. On October 29, 2013, their work will be revealed with the global release of Story Sprouts Anthology 2013.

In a revolutionary new approach to writing and publishing, the Children's Book Writers of Los Angeles turned convention upside down with Story Sprouts: CBW-LA Writing Day Exercises and Anthology 2013.

A fresh take on an old classic, the Anthology uncovers the creative process in its raw form, celebrating the seeds of story generation. Framing the authors' contributions are the 10 writing exercises that guided them along their journey, as well as tips and techniques shared at the workshop.



"First time writers often dread writing query letters because they fear that they lack the credentials to make their author bios stand out," said CBW-LA President and Founder Nutschell Anne Windsor. "Our goal for the Workshop and Anthology was to give our members their first taste of publication, giving them the confidence to pursue their writing careers. For workshop participants who have yet to achieve their dreams of becoming a published author, Story Sprouts will be the first of their many achievements, and something that will inspire them to keep on reaching for their writing dreams."

Guided by the writing exercises and handouts, anthology authors produced two pieces. One revealed insights "On Writing" and the other was a fictional piece based on a photo



prompts. Submissions range from poetry and narrative essay to flash fiction and picture book manuscripts.

The innovative publication is in line with the non-profit organization's values – support and education for writers, amateur and experienced alike. By including the workshop prompts and advice, writers of all ages, levels and ability may follow along from home and enjoy an experience similar to workshop attendees. At the same time, the Anthology serves as a launching pad for new faces in the kid lit industry.

Some of the author names will be familiar to Hollywood and literary insiders. Contributor Abi Estrin wrote the animated adaptation of Ben Hur and produced several episodes of On the Road in America. Contributor Lynne Southerland has 20 years experience in Hollywood; her credits include co-directing Mulan 2 and co-producing Disney's An Extremely Goofy Movie and HBO's Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales for Every Child. Contributor Donna Marie Robb's stories have been published in several literary magazines and she her children's book reviews have been published in the School Library Journal.

The mix of familiar faces and relative unknowns is an encouraging sign for the Anthology's producers, who sought an experience that would transcend expertise and touch upon the passion that creative spirits share.

Windsor and CBW-LA Publications Editor Alana Garrigues produced the Writing Day Workshop and Anthology with the assistance and support of the board of directors.

Windsor drew on her experience as an English teacher and her passion for the world of children's literature to determine the format of the workshop and lead the participants through their exercises. Garrigues, a freelance journalist and creative non-fiction author, translated the workshop into a narrative form and edited the 38 manuscripts included in the book.

The two are already planning the group's next Writing Day Anthology workshop, tentatively slated for May 2014.

Book reviewers may request a complimentary review copy by contacting Windsor at [nutschell@cbw-la.org](mailto:nutschell@cbw-la.org). Story Sprouts is available through Amazon and Kindle or at [www.storysproutsanthology.com](http://www.storysproutsanthology.com). Booksellers may contact Windsor to inquire about carrying the book. On Goodreads.

#### About CBW-LA

The non-profit 501(c)3 CBW-LA was founded in 2010 in Torrance, California. CBW-LA provides education and inspiration for published writers and writers on the road to publication. We provide a venue to share knowledge and information between writers, members of the publishing industry, educators, libraries, and other members of the Los Angeles community involved in promoting children's literature and literacy for children. For additional information, visit <http://www.cbw-la.org> or <http://www.storysproutsanthology.com>.

## Story Sprouts Excerpt

Please enjoy a brief excerpt from the book. This explains how we kicked off the Writing Day Workshop and gives readers a chance to delve into the first exercise participants were given.

The entire anthology includes 38 original works, 10 exercises, four handouts, and loads of valuable information and reflection on the writing craft.

### Section 1: On Writing Exercises

#### Why Practice?

Writing is a craft. As such, it takes a great deal of precision and practice to achieve success and satisfaction.

Why practice? Why subject yourself to hours of writing and revision and idea creation?

Because practice makes perfect. We know this to be true about every skill. The only way that we can develop our writing skills—our craft—is to keep on practicing. It doesn't mean that an author should hunker down and crank out novel after novel or picture book after picture book. To do so would not only prove repetitive and exhausting, but the author might also run the risk of sounding formulaic. While a successful author may ultimately publish many novels or picture books, that should not be the extent of his or her writing practice.

Practice that leads to inspiration and perfection, to mastering the craft, requires an author to dedicate time to honing the craft by focusing on the act of writing itself. Often, authors and aspiring writers only engage with the manuscript, short story, or article they are working on. However, sometimes authors need a break from hard work. It is necessary to savor moments of writing just for the fun of composition. Or for the purpose of learning how to write better. Or to break through to new ideas and avenues of thought. Those are the times that creative writing exercises come in very handy.

The writing exercises included in this book—the exercises that inspired the stories you are about to read—are designed to help you, the writer, find your author voice and style.

The exercises are not overly complicated or time consuming. They were developed for shorter forms of literary works, such as essays, poems, and flash fiction. Descriptions of these formats, along with suggested techniques for working in each, are included in this book. Perhaps you want to approach an exercise using all three forms, one at a time, to see how your writing differs and which one best suits your voice.

The structure of this book mimics our Writing Day workshop. The first half focuses on warming up the mental muscles, followed by reflections and thoughts on writing in general. The second half showcases your writing chops and allows you to flex those literary muscles a little bit as you enjoy free reign over the topic of your choice, based on a photo prompt and assisted by a toolbox of story aids.



## Exercise One: Warm Up Right Brain Reigns - The Free Write

Any athlete will tell you that the first step to a successful workout is the warm-up. A few minutes to ease in, to get the muscles warm and pliable and the mind accustomed to a new activity. Writing is no different, and a little free writing to warm up does just the trick. To prepare for this first exercise, you will need:

\*Laptop or pen(cil) and paper \*Timer

The Rules:

Set a timer for five minutes.

Write.

No stopping or punctuation allowed.

Tips:

Focus on the flow. Let your writing breathe. Do not think.

Write whatever comes to mind. Do not worry about correct punctuation, grammar, or spelling. Let it be. Ignore the mistakes and go. If a topic appears, embrace it, but don't pick a topic to start.

Write without stopping. At the end of the exercise, you should have a full block of text or a very long, rambling paragraph. No lists. Lists cut off your thoughts and force you to take pause.

Do not stop writing until your timer goes off.

Do not reread what you've written until time is up.

Why Does Free Writing Work?

Experimentation has shown that two different sides, or hemispheres, of the brain are responsible for different types of thinking. In very basic terms, we use our right brain for writing and our left brain for editing. Free writing allows us to tap into our right brain and shut out the internal editors. By forbidding a pause or punctuation, we incapacitate the bossy left brain and allow right brain to flow.

Much like physical exercise helps improve our body's health, writing exercises help us stretch our brain power and improve our mental health. By incorporating free writing into your schedule at least once a month, you will begin to notice improvements in your imaginative and descriptive writing powers.

But If It Looks Messy, What's The Point?

Idea creation.

Free writing is a great way to spark a new story idea or warm up your writing muscles before diving into your manuscript. You can also use free writing exercises to help you work out ideas when you're not sure of how a scene is supposed to unravel. Something else free writing is good for? Battling writer's block. Free write to look writer's block square in the face and beat it! The mindless act of free writing will help you release your creative side when confronted with a closed gate to Writerville.

# Writing Day Anthology Workshop 2014: Get Published with CBW-LA

DATE: May 31, 2014 (Saturday)

TIME: 8:15 AM – 5:00 PM

\* Registration & Socialization begins at 8:15 AM

\* Workshop will start at exactly 9AM.

VENUE: Torrance Airport (Zamperini Field) Meeting Room  
3301 Airport Drive, Torrance CA 90505

## FEE:

Online payment before April 1st, 2014: Early-Bird

Members: \$95

Early-Bird Non-members: \$

Online payment April 1 - May 30, 2014

Members: \$125

Non-members: \$135

## Includes:

Full day writing workshop

Lunch, snacks and beverages throughout the day

1 print copy of the finished anthology

1 digital copy of the finished anthology

Professional editing, formatting & book design

Handouts, Workshop Materials & Swag

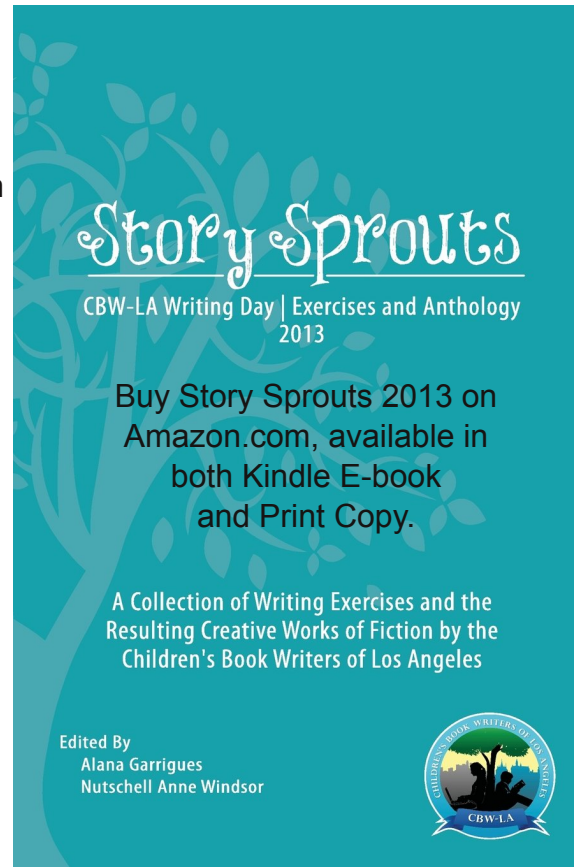
FREE door prizes

Inspiration and publication!

YOUR name and work in print!

Register early. Space is limited!

REGISTER AT: [www.cbw-la.org](http://www.cbw-la.org)



Go to [www.cbw-la.org](http://www.cbw-la.org) and click on the BLOG Tab to learn more about last year's Anthology Workshop. Check out our Story Sprouts website:

Do you want to see your name - and story - in print THIS summer? Are you looking for that extra inspiration to take your writing to the next level? Do you feel ready to dedicate a full day to the craft?

Register for the Writing Day Anthology Workshop now and do all three!

Join your fellow writers on the road to publication for an intensive day of creative writing, and see your work published in the Story Sprouts Anthology this summer.

CBW-LA Founder and President Nutschell Windsor will lead attendees on a whirlwind adventure through the writing process, complete with prompts, tips, games, time for reflection and revision ... along with food and socializing along the way! Nutschell's positive, organized and inspirational approach to working with writers has resulted in glowing reviews on meetup.com.

This year's theme is VOICE! So get ready to learn techniques and writing exercises designed to help you find your writing voice and style and hone your writing skills.

By the end of the workshop, you will have a minimum of two pieces ready for publication in this year's CBW-LA Story Sprouts Anthology.

All writers will receive one complimentary print copy and one complimentary digital copy of the finished product - and additional print and digital copies will be available through Amazon and at future CBW-LA events! It will make a great stocking stuffer for your biggest writing fans on your holiday shopping list. Anticipated publication date Sept. 30, 2014.\*



## A Chat with Story Sprouts Authors

Thank you to the nine Story Sprouts authors who shared their thoughts on kid lit and story telling over at Page Cravings during our whirlwind blog tour!

### What cultural value do you see in storytelling?

**Lynne Southerland:** Stories provide the connective tissue of our world. They link us together within our specific families or cultures and then fan out beyond our horizon to demonstrate that no matter the idiosyncrasies of a particular group, we are all exploring the fundamental questions of existence.

### Why write for children rather than adults? Why did you choose juvenile lit?

**Diane Fisk:** I enjoy writing for children because they are still impressionable and open to forming new opinions. As a former teacher I find it rewarding to write a story which highlights a particular positive thought or idea which might be adopted by the reader.

**Donna Atmur** (Donna Marie Robb): Juvenile and young adult literature has always been the genre that came naturally to me, no matter my age. I've noticed that most of my stories and novels, even before I was conscious of doing it, featured youthful protagonists. I suppose this is because children and teens, unencumbered by adult responsibilities, are free to go off on wild adventures. They are coming of age, so their stories tend to follow the "Hero's Journey" motif in an arc that shows them maturing through their experiences. This is both a challenge and a joy for me to explore as an author.

In addition to her contribution to Story Sprouts, Donna's creativity can be read at FictionPress.

**Glenn Jason Hanna:** I don't write for children. In today's pigeon-holing society, you only get to market to one niche at a time, so I had to pick something. But I've always believed that a truly great story appeals to many people of differing ages, races, cultures, religions and so on. When I was a kid, I read what I wanted. I loved *Tales of the Fourth Grade Nothing*, but I also loved *The Man without a Country*. And I still do. Children have the same passions and fears and hopes and sensibilities that adults have, but because they have limited life experiences they encounter each and every event with a greater sense of wonder and imagination. So, no I don't write for children. I write for that sense of the impossible that every child has, and that we can have if we only let ourselves remember that it's still beating in our soul.

**Lucy Ravitch:** I write for kids because I loved being a kid. I loved learning and playing. Friendships and memories that I had as a child still resonate with me. I want my books and writing to be a precious part of several children's memories. Knowing that I can touch lives of children keeps me going toward my publishing goal.

**Lissa Ross:** A while ago, I came up with a concept for a children's animated TV series, "Alias Jet Girl" and started pitching my idea around Hollywood. I had no idea that very few shows get picked up each year, and unless you have already have had a successful show, it's even less likely! Refusing to give up, I decided to turn my concept into a series of children's books, and joined CBW-LA last year, with the hopes of navigating the world of children's book writing with like-minded souls! It has been a great experience to attend guest lectures and workshops, culminating in actually becoming a printed writer with our anthology - Story Sprouts. Yay!

## What do you give up in order to make the time to write?

**Abi Estrin:** Sleep. Mostly sleep.

And security.

I've actually left jobs in order to write, in order to make sure that I have the time to pursue my passion and my dream. I've never regretted it. I've always felt what I've given up is for a worthy cause.

Movies.

Family events. Dinners. Parties. Days Off. More sleep.

Just about everything, actually.

Sometimes I've had to sacrifice money, time, even relationships in order to write, but thankfully my husband is also a writer and we support each other. It's been a difficult road at times, and a challenging one – but incredibly rewarding as well.

No matter how scared I get or how often I question myself, I am reminded of one of my favorite quotes of all times: "Be bold and mighty forces will come to your aid." – Goethe

I believe that in the end, it's worth it... Writing is always worth it.

## How did you become involved with Story Sprouts?

**Nutschell Anne Windsor:** The idea for Story Sprouts came about during one of our CBW-LA board meetings in 2012. Our goal was to give our budding writers their first taste of publication, and to encourage them to keep on pursuing their writing dreams.

I had facilitated several creative writing workshops for the group, and members enjoyed the activity inspired them to come up with their own pieces afterward. We (the CBW-LA board) decided that we could take this creative writing workshop to the next level by allowing participants to gain publishing credits. Guided by a series of writing exercises and creative prompts, participants rose to the challenge and came up with two pieces for publication during the six-hour workshop.

## What did you find most useful in learning to write? What was least useful or most destructive?

**Alana Garrigues:** I found reading the most useful in learning to write. When I was younger, my stories very closely "mimicked" whatever book I had just finished reading (and by mimic, I mean I may have changed a male character to a female or changed a name, but otherwise the stories



were nearly identical. We're talking back to seven-years-old, but Charlotte's Web and Trumpet of the Swan were retold more times than I can count that year...).

Over time, my stories evolved as did my writing style. But honing in on what drives me to read more – humor, wisdom, cliff-hangers – and identifying what makes me put a book right back on a shelf – endless chatter about landscape, lack of diversity among characters, droll terminology – helps me tremendously. It all works subconsciously to allow me to edit several times beneath the surface before I write.

Which brings me to the second half of the question – what doesn't help. Notice I said I edit subconsciously – it's a natural part of my flow, but it is deep, deep beneath the surface. Editing consciously as you write does not help. At all. Neither does a strict diet of proper grammar. I'm sure there are hordes of English teachers who would disagree with me, but I believe the first, and most important, aspect of a story is its voice and ambiance. Which sometimes means breaking the rules – like my use of hyphens and sentences that start with "but" or lack a subject in this answer.

Editing is important, especially when turning in freelance work or when writing in another voice, but it is not the core of the story. The core of the story is what the characters whisper to you between the plot you've selected for them, and the ways in which they surprise you with their own banter, twists and turns. And if you've edited their voices before they can speak, you've lost the flavor of literature.



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## Quarterly Questions

An opportunity to get to know your fellow CBW-LA members a little bit better, and to share your best tips and techniques from the writing life.

Thanks to all of you who submitted answers for this issue of Scribblers' Scoop!

### How do you create - and stick to - goals? What is your best goal-setting advice?

**Clara Asuncion:** My best advice would be to know yourself: set goals that are reasonable for your schedule and energy level that you can sustain. Someone who works full-time and has a lengthy commute may be able to power through a month of pre-work and lunch-hour revision dashes and writing until bedtime but, depending on the person, it may not be sustainable and it may make finishing a project, or coming back to it, difficult. I've learned to set goals through soft deadlines, focusing more on what work I can do toward the goal rather than being frustrated at an unfinished task that may become complicated by real life. For instance, I consider research and outlining and idea/scene development toward my writing efforts.

**Tiffani Barth:** Set a deadline for yourself and give yourself consequences if you don't meet it. It's the only thing that works for me.

**Stephanie Dreyer:** This year, instead of setting a bunch of goals with deadlines and then breaking them down into smaller milestones that lead up to that goal, I have made goals based on how I want to feel. For example, instead of "find an agent this year," my goal is "find an agent that gets me good and loves my work as much as I love to produce it - no matter how long it takes." "Write something that expands my soul and serves others daily for as long as my schedule allows each day," instead of "write 1 hour every day."

**Angie Flores:** JUST DO IT! Sometimes goals put on too much pressure. For me, when I see an opportunity, I will do my best to take it and not let the moment slip by. I have tasks that I need to do. If I label them goals, the pressure mounts and I am hard on myself for not obtaining them. I try and make a point to do something daily that will have a positive end result.

**Alana Garrigues:** I've started a rubric inspired by a friend. Every five years, she sets goals - large and small - to accomplish by her next milestone birthday. For example 30x30, 35x35, 40x40. I'm currently a couple months away from completing my 35x35. It keeps me focused on the bigger picture, and provides opportunity to set goals across several topics, reminding me to stay balanced. I also have a fabulous whiteboard a friend designed and gave me with all the days of the week. The board includes whimsical girl swinging through the days to help me keep my schedule straight, along with the quote, "The best way to predict your future is to create it," by Abraham Lincoln. In addition to meetings and appointments, I often include a daily goal.

**Cassie Gustafson:** I have a maintain a good reward system to make sure I get my writing done. Usually one long scene equals watching the next episode of a favorite show.

**Nutschell Anne Windsor:** I have a small, fat notebook which I carry around all the time. Every morning before I get the day started, I list down all the things I have to do in this notebook, and I check them off as I accomplish them. If I accomplish all the items on my daily to do list, I put a little star beside the date. My goal is to get a star every day.



## What is your oddest writing quirk?

**Tiffani Barth:** Whenever I write a new book I find a single track of music, normally from a movie soundtrack that fits the overall tone of my book, and listen to it on repeat while I write the entire first draft. It immediately puts me in the zone.

**Angie Flores:** Before I settle down to write, I like to skate, or walk by the beach, and talk into my recorder. Then, when it's quiet - usually in the late evening, I like having a candle or some air sweetener, and a cup of hot tea to calm myself and open my mind before I write anything - whether it's stories, resumes, job descriptions, I need to be free from distractions. No music, kids in the room, or TV - just me. I don't think it is too odd...

**Alana Garrigues:** I can never, ever write on the first page of a notebook. I always keep it blank - there is something about committing words to the first page that makes me feel as though the entire contents of the notebook would be irreversibly set in stone to follow the tone of whatever filled the first page.

**Cassie Gustafson:** Writing new material with pen on paper makes all the difference. For me, there is a huge disconnect between the computer screen and myself, and I end up getting lost in my own story! Some of my best ideas have come from attacking scratch paper with a pen (not a pencil or I'll self-edit!).

**Nutschell Anne Windsor:** I need to have a drink while I'm working. No not that kind of drink. My beverage of choice is a cup of hot, black tea. If it's too warm for that, I'll usually drink water, coconut juice, or iced tea.

## QUARTERLY QUESTIONS COMING UP ...

Please share your thoughts on the following Quarterly Questions for the next newsletter:

- \* How do you brainstorm story ideas?
- \* What do you wish non-writers understood better about writers?

Submit your answers to [alana@cbw-la.org](mailto:alana@cbw-la.org) by Wednesday, April 16 to be included in the May Scribblers' Scoop!

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## WE WANT TO TALK ABOUT YOU!

We are also looking for CBW-LA Members and Industry Professionals to interview for our Spotlight Series. If you're interested in being highlighted - or your agenda or editor would like to be interviewed - please contact [alana@cbw-la.org](mailto:alana@cbw-la.org) with your contact information and a little bit about where you are along your writing journey.

Deadline: Tuesday, April 1, for May newsletter consideration. Contact information received after that date will be kept on file for future newsletters.

## CBW-LA KICKS OFF THE NEW YEAR WITH A WRITING CAREER WORKSHOP

For three years, CBW-LA President Nutschell Windsor has led a "Kickstarting Your Writing Career" workshop in January. It's a favorite of many CBW-LA members, and an opportunity to settle into the new year, take advantage of fresh writing resolutions and a the calm after the holiday storm, and kick into high gear.

For many, it serves as both a reality check on the work a writing career takes and a helpful organizational tool to get moving towards that goal.

Every year, Nutschell tweaks her handouts and presentation to keep things fresh and new.

Here's a peak into this year's workshop, excerpted from The Writing Nut blog.

First, participants were asked to reflect on their writing past and present by answering the following questions:

Who are you?  
What kind of writer are you?  
When did your writing journey begin?

Participants were then challenged to look ahead into their writing futures with the following questions:

Why do you want to be a writer?  
Where do you want your writing to take you?  
How will you achieve the kind of writing career you want?

Then came the reality check. In order to achieve their writing dreams, participants first had to come face to face with publishing reality.



Nutschell introduced to the publishing process and the key paths to publication: Traditional Publishing, Self-Publishing and other publishing options such as In-Progress publishing, Blogs and Websites, Fanfiction and Crowdfunding.

Next, participants were given a list of tools to kickstart their writing careers. Participants were given the opportunity to develop their mission and vision, as well as list down their writing goals. They were given templates to help them get started on a five-year writing career plan and templates to get their schedules and goals organized.



With the many publishing options now available, writers need to figure out what kind of writing career they desire, and commit to it.

The final portion of the workshop encouraged participants to take their writing dreams seriously by fully committing. Committing to being a writer means keeping true to the “write” path and keeping the promises they’ve made to

themselves. These promises can be as simple as finishing a draft or trying their best to get published.

Workshop participants wrote the following words down as part of their personal writing contract:

I am a writer. I will commit time and patience into achieving my writing goals. This year, my biggest writing goals are: (participants listed their biggest goal(s) for each role they plan to fulfill: Author, Publisher, Entrepreneur)

I will do everything in my power to have the writing future I envision. I will become an author.

They then signed and dated their writing contract and asked fellow attendees to sign as witnesses.

Participants left with tons of handouts, worksheets, templates, a renewed passion for writing, and a sense of how to take their writing to the next level.

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## TALKING ABOUT: VOICE WITH MIDDLE GRADE AUTHOR KRISTEN KITTSCHER

(excerpted and adapted from original post by Nutschell Windsor on The Writing Nut)

On February 22, CBW-LA was lucky to have middle grade mystery maven Kristen Kittscher, author of *WIG IN THE WINDOW*, as our guest speaker.

Kristen began by stating that voice is a personal element, something that cannot be taught, but can be learned through experience.

"There is something in a person's voice that is consistent in the background," she said. "You don't have to worry, because that's in you already. It's like worrying about your fingerprints. We want to demystify this idea that there is something outside of you that you need to learn today. Voice is already in you. This is something that only writing solidifies over time."

She shared a favorite quote by Neil Gaman:

"Start telling the stories that only you can tell, because there'll always be better writers than you and there'll always be smarter writers than you. There will always be people who are much better at doing this or doing that – but you are the only you."

Kristen shared excerpts from 10 different middle grade books as samples of the different voices across the middle grade genre, and workshop attendees were asked to observe elements of "voice" as they read through two excerpts each, and a class discussion followed.

One element that Kristen highlighted was the use of comparison in writing - she said that comparisons are very important in the middle grade genre, and present an opportunity for an authentic, age-appropriate voice.

Comparing clothing, music, height, surroundings, and more can be a very useful tool for writers, and a good place to introduce elements of humor and highlight that awkward preteen stage when kids are stuck between family and friends, childhood and adulthood, looking to their peers for ways to self-identify.

Participants were then asked to play with voice, "trying on" different characters to talk about the same concept - gardening, surfing, Halloween costumes.

A few participants shared their pieces, and some had the class rolling with laughter, illustrating the concept that each voice is individual and unique - and humor is a key element in middle grade literature.



To put participants back in the middle grade mindset, Kristen asked them to call out some memories from their childhood. A freewrite followed immediately afterward where participants wrote about a childhood memory. One tip Kristen gave in case participants got stuck was to write “I remember...” and finish the sentence with a childhood memory.



Towards the end of the workshop, Kristen shared her own personal journey to publication, along with tips and techniques on how to develop voice.

Here are a few of Kristen's most inspiring thoughts:

“One of the most important things you need to do to get back to voice, is to not criticize yourself yet. Don't look analytically at anything. When you're feeling stuck—the beauty of writing is that

nobody's there in your room and nobody's gonna see it. The other thing is that you don't have a finite amount of material in you and it's over. You can keep going and keep creating things. “

“A lot of people ask me how long did it take to write your book, and I don't think I know the answer to that question. Because I would remember coming up with that idea, and then I took up golf, and then I played with my puppy and hung out with my friends. I feel like we call it time, we talk about having time, but writing has nothing to do with time (although it does take time). But we are making choices all the time about how to use it, and most of the time we're worried. It has more to do with fear....It probably would have taken me nine months if I hadn't wasted so much time. But I don't like to think about it as wasting, but some of it was that I wasn't in the right mindset. And the way to get yourself in the right mindset is to just practice over and over again, have rituals and just keep writing and keep on doing these exercises...”

“I like giving a voice to kids, giving them fancy words, because their emotions are bigger than what they can express. Part of what we're doing in writing for children is giving names to things, and to do it in the way that it captures that wonder or excitement or confusion, but helping them give a name to it.”

“Kids see complexity, too. Even if the language is simple like in Linda Irvin's Hound Dog True, the language is simple but the feeling behind it isn't simple at all. If you can tap into those emotions and feelings, you're never going to be out of date...Just take the things that you remember and find the equivalent. Like if you remember using blackboards, ask kids what they use nowadays—maybe a smart board with wires...”





## STORY SPROUTS ON GLOBAL TOUR

In January, Story Sprouts Co-Editors Alana Garrigues and Nutschell Anne Windsor embarked on a worldwide whirlwind of a book blog tour. It was a lot of fun, and very inspirational to chat with authors from every corner of the planet. Each stop was a brand new article - some humorous, some informative - all about the writing industry.

Included in this newsletter are a few samples from that tour, but we encourage all of you to visit our amazing hosts, read the guest posts, and say thanks for sharing their virtual space with CBW-LA!

Here's the full list of articles and blog hosts:

January 3 – Karen Strong: Finding Inspiration Through Quotes by Nutschell Anne Windsor  
<http://www.karen-strong.com/2014/01/03/inspiration-through-quotes/>

January 4 – Michael Di Gesu: The Many Roles of an Indie Author\* by Nutschell Anne Windsor  
<http://writing-art-and-design.blogspot.com/2014/01/sprout-new-lease-on-your-writing-life.html>

January 6 – Mooderino: Choosing a Title for Your Fiction and Non-fiction Books by Nutschell Anne Windsor  
<http://moodywriting.blogspot.com/2014/01/choosing-title-for-your-fiction-or.html>

January 7 – Theresa Milstein: The Writer's Workshop – From Blank Page to Published in Six Hours by Alana Garrigues  
<http://theresamilstein.blogspot.com/2014/01/story-sprouts.html>

January 8 – Jemi Fraser: Story Sprouts and the Beauty of a Moment by Alana Garrigues  
<http://www.jemifraser.blogspot.com/2014/01/story-sprouts-and-beauty-of-moment.html>

January 9 – Cherie Reich: Vampires, Fairies and Dragons, Oh My!: Inviting the Whimsical into Your Story by Alana Garrigues  
<http://cheriereich.blogspot.com/2014/01/alana-garrigues-on-vampires-fairies-and.html>

January 10 – Medeia Sharif: The Benefits of Free Writing by Nutschell Anne Windsor  
<http://www.medeiasharif.com/2014/01/story-sprouts-blog-tour-benefits-of.html>

January 13 – Julie Flanders: Using Photo Prompts to Spark Your Story Ideas by Nutschell Anne Windsor  
<http://julieflanders.blogspot.com/2014/01/story-sprouts-and-chasing-anya.html>

January 14 – Nas Dean: The Thrill of the First Time (Publishing) by Alana Garrigues  
<http://nas-dean.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-thrill-of-first-time.html>

January 15 – Alex Cavanaugh: 5 Movies Based on YA Books to Look Forward to this 2014 by Nutschell Anne Windsor  
<http://www.alexjcavanaugh.blogspot.com/2014/01/movies-based-on-ya-books-tv-trivia.html>

For more information, and a couple of bonus cover reveals and shout-outs, visit [www.storysproutsanthology.com](http://www.storysproutsanthology.com).



- January 16 – Shelly Arkon: Book for Sale, Book for Sale! Hawking the Self-Published Story by Alana Garrigues <http://shellysnovicewritings.blogspot.com/2014/01/sir-poops-and-hair-ball-guest-post.html?m=1>
- January 17 – Arlee Bird: The Benefits of Joining a Professional Writing Organization by Nutschell Anne Windsor <http://tossingitout.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-benefits-of-joining-professional.html>
- January 20 – J.L. Campbell: Using Archetypes to Create Your Characters by Nutschell Anne Windsor <http://www.joylcampbell.com/2014/01/story-sprouts-online-marketing-symposium.html>
- January 21 – Christine Rains: Writing Groups: Why Writing in Community Rocks our Socks by Alana Garrigues <http://christinerains-writer.blogspot.com/2014/01/story-sprouts-blog-tour-why-writing-in.html>
- January 22 – Annalisa Crawford: Matched: I Now Declare You Writer and Editor by Alana Garrigues <http://annalisacrawford.blogspot.com/2014/01/story-sprouts-blog-tour-matched-i-now.html>
- January 23 – Lisa Gail Green: Ten Reasons to Write for Kids\* by Alana Garrigues <http://paranormalpointofview.blogspot.com/2014/01/id-like-to-welcome-some-very-special.html>
- January 24 – MJ Fifield: The Value of Critiques by Nutschell Anne Windsor <http://mjfifield.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-value-of-critiques.html>
- January 25 – PK Hrezo: The Power of Names by Nutschell Anne Windsor <http://pk-hrezo.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-power-of-names.html>
- January 26 – Mrs. Mommy Booknerd: Editors' Interview: Story Sprouts: CBW-LA Writing Day Exercises and Anthology <http://mrsmommybooknerd.blogspot.com/2014/01/showcase-story-sprouts-cbw-la-writing.html>
- January 27 – Stephen Tremp: Assembling Your Publishing Team by Nutschell Anne Windsor <http://authorstephentremp.blogspot.com/2014/01/2014-to-z-blogging-challenge-and.html>
- January 28 – Emily Ann Girdner: From Canvas to Page – Art & Literature by Alana Garrigues <http://anythingimagined.blogspot.com/2014/01/from-canvas-to-page-art-and-literature.html>
- January 29 – Lynda R. Young: The Five Stages of First Publication by Alana Garrigues <http://lyndaryoung.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-five-stages-of-first-publication.html>
- January 30 – L. Diane Wolfe: Help! I've Gotta Edit! by Alana Garrigues <http://circleoffriendsbooks.blogspot.com/2014/01/help-its-time-to-revise-story-sprouts.html>
- January 31 – Milo James Fowler: A Writer's Poison by Nutschell Anne Windsor <http://www.milojamesfowler.com/2014/01/a-writers-poison-guest-post-by.html>

\*See article in this edition of Scribblers' Scoop.

## Top Ten Reasons to Write for Kids

by Alana Garrigues

(originally published on Lisa Gail Green's blog)

10. Eternal Youth. YA Authors actually get to say things like "totes cray-cray" and "OMG - BFFs 4eva," listen to teen pop, dish about the latest Miley Cyrus video, and call it research. The rest of us run the risk of looking like Matthew McConaughey in *Dazed and Confused* - past our prime, still hanging on to teendom for dear life. (Wait, that movie reference ages me, doesn't it? Oh well...)

9. Angst, Angst Baby. Speaking of teens, YA Authors also get to tap into all the drama and angst that we're supposed to grow out of post-high school. Let's face it, sometimes it's fun (therapeutic?) to throw a temper tantrum in our head and carry on and on about how unfair life can be, and how we'll just shrivel up and die if our best friend all of a sudden disses us or we wake up with the worst hair day ever.

8. Willing Suspension of Disbelief be Damned. In high school, we were told to consciously turn our thoughts away from real world limitations that would change literature - think *Frankenstein* or *Lord of the Flies*. Pretty unbelievable. As adults, we read fantasy and know exactly what is made-up. Young kids? They just believe it all. If you write about fairies or leprechauns, they believe you and are able to create, in their minds, a new world even more magical than you could have imagined. And they will believe they can go there!

7. Illustrators Rock. How often do writers get artists to draw their stories? Picture book authors get to see how their verbal dreams are interpreted with pen and paper. Such a cool way to connect and see your story through someone else's eyes!

6. Character Loyalists. Kids are nothing if not a little bit one-track-minded when it comes to life. They are fiercely loyal. And that is a good thing for kid lit writers, all the way from early reader through YA. If you can create a character that resonates with your audience, you're golden. Think *Ramona Quimby*, *Fancy Nancy*, *Pinkalicious*, *Ivy and Bean*, *Nancy Drew*, *Hardy Boys*, *Harry Potter*. These particularly persuasive petite readers will convince their parents to buy every book (in the name of education, of course), watch every movie, pick up the merchandise, and chat, chat, chat with friends about how great your characters are.

5. Bigger Calling. As a writer, you are not just making up a story. You are helping kids appreciate reading, writing and literature. You are turning on their

imagination where they can travel and dream and get excited about history and science. You are bringing stories to life. You are helping them turn off the electronics and enjoy the simple pleasures in life. And that is huge.

4. Raise Awareness. As a kid lit writer, you can subtly fit an important theme into your book, and engage a child's mind to think about how to handle the really tough stuff. Think kindness, or standing up to bullies, or accepting every person, or keeping the earth clean, or letting kids know they can make a difference. You can even help them work through loss, new siblings, cross-country moves, divorce - anything a kid might need to process.

3. Build Confidence. Ever notice how parents disappear in most children's books? Kids in books aren't told how to lead their lives, they just get to lead them. Kids are the heroes and the leaders in their stories. Books build up a child's confidence to take risks, try new things and dream big.

2. It's FUN! Kid lit authors get to play every day, from creating new worlds and characters to dressing up in silly costumes to attend school readings. There is nothing better than the chance to play in a kid's world forever!

1. You are a Hero. Do you remember when you were a kid and an author came to your school to read his/her story and autograph your book? Do you remember that sense of admiration and mystery? That wonder and creative spirit? You are now that hero. Embrace it!

DIRECT FROM THE STORY SPROUTS BLOG TOUR

## Story Sprouts Blog Tour: The Many Roles of an Indie Author

by Nutschell Anne Windsor  
(originally published on Michael di Gesu's blog)

Last year my nonprofit writing group, CBW-LA, published the Story Sprouts anthology. It was our first foray into the challenging yet wonderful world of self-publishing.

We learned a lot during the four months it took us to publish the anthology, including the fact that indie authors have to play many roles.

### 1. AUTHOR

This is the most important role you have to play. As an author, you give birth to new characters, create worlds for them to live in and bombard them with a thousand conflicts to make them grow. You will rewrite and revise your manuscript until the plot holes have been filled and the story flows seamlessly.

### 2. EDITOR

As an indie author, you're advised to hire editors before you self-publish. But before you even hire a developmental editor to see how your story flows, and a copy-editor to make sure you have dotted all the i's and crossed all your t's, you still need to make sure that you have



personally edited your manuscript to the best of your ability. Sending a polished manuscript to your editors will ensure that you can publish it sooner rather than later. This also saves you money in the long run. A polished manuscript will have none of the unnecessary scenes and wasted words—which means less work for the editor and less pages for the printers to print.

### 3. DESIGNER/ ARTIST

A book is judged by its cover—at least initially, so as an indie author, you're advised to hire a book cover designer, particularly if you're not artistically-inclined. If you happen to have graphic design skills, then you're one of the lucky few who can save some money to create your own cover art. But whether or not you do hire a designer for your book cover, you still need to learn about what makes a book cover stand out. You'll need to learn about fonts, colors and text and graphic placement so you can apply it to your own book. Since you know your story inside and out, you're the only one who can give the graphic designer the concept so he can create a cover that gives readers an idea of what your story is about.

### 4. FORMATTER

As an indie author, you'll need to format your book not just for print but for the different e-book platforms out there (mobi, epub, pdf, etc). Thankfully, this is one role which you can delegate to a professional, if you so choose. When we created STORY SPROUTS, we made sure that we hired a formatter like Morgan Media to work on our manuscript because we wanted to make sure the anthology looked professional and polished on all platforms.

### 5. DISTRIBUTOR

Will you be publishing your ebook with Amazon, iBooks, Smashwords, Barnes & Nobles' Nook or all of them? How much will you sell your ebooks for? How about your print book? Will you be selling them just domestically or internationally? Will you be selling to bookstores and libraries? These are just some of the questions you'll need to answer and work on as you fulfill the role of distributor.

### 6. SALES/ MARKETING/PROMOTIONS REPRESENTATIVE

You'll have to create a marketing plan and put it into motion. How will you get the word out about your book? Will you be doing book tours? Will you do Blog tours and promote your work through various social media? Will you give away swag on your blog? How about promotional items related to your book like bookmarks, pins or t-shirts? As an indie author, you'll not only have to be your own marketing representative, you'll also have to be your own publicist. This will include setting up your own events, asking for book reviews, and creating publicity materials such as a press kit or press releases.

### 7. ACCOUNTANT/PROJECT MANAGER

As an indie author, you'll also have to be your own project manager. You'll need to create a financial plan and stick to it. You'll have to make sure everything from writing to editing to publishing stays within your set timeline. This goes for the allotted budget as well. Spreadsheets will become your best friend as you also play the role of accountant. You'll have to keep track of your sales, your vendors and your taxes.

These are the major roles an indie author has to play, along with being a multi-tasker, problem-solver and go-getter as well. It takes a lot of time and hard work, but it is so worth it to be a part of every step your book takes from its inception to its publication.

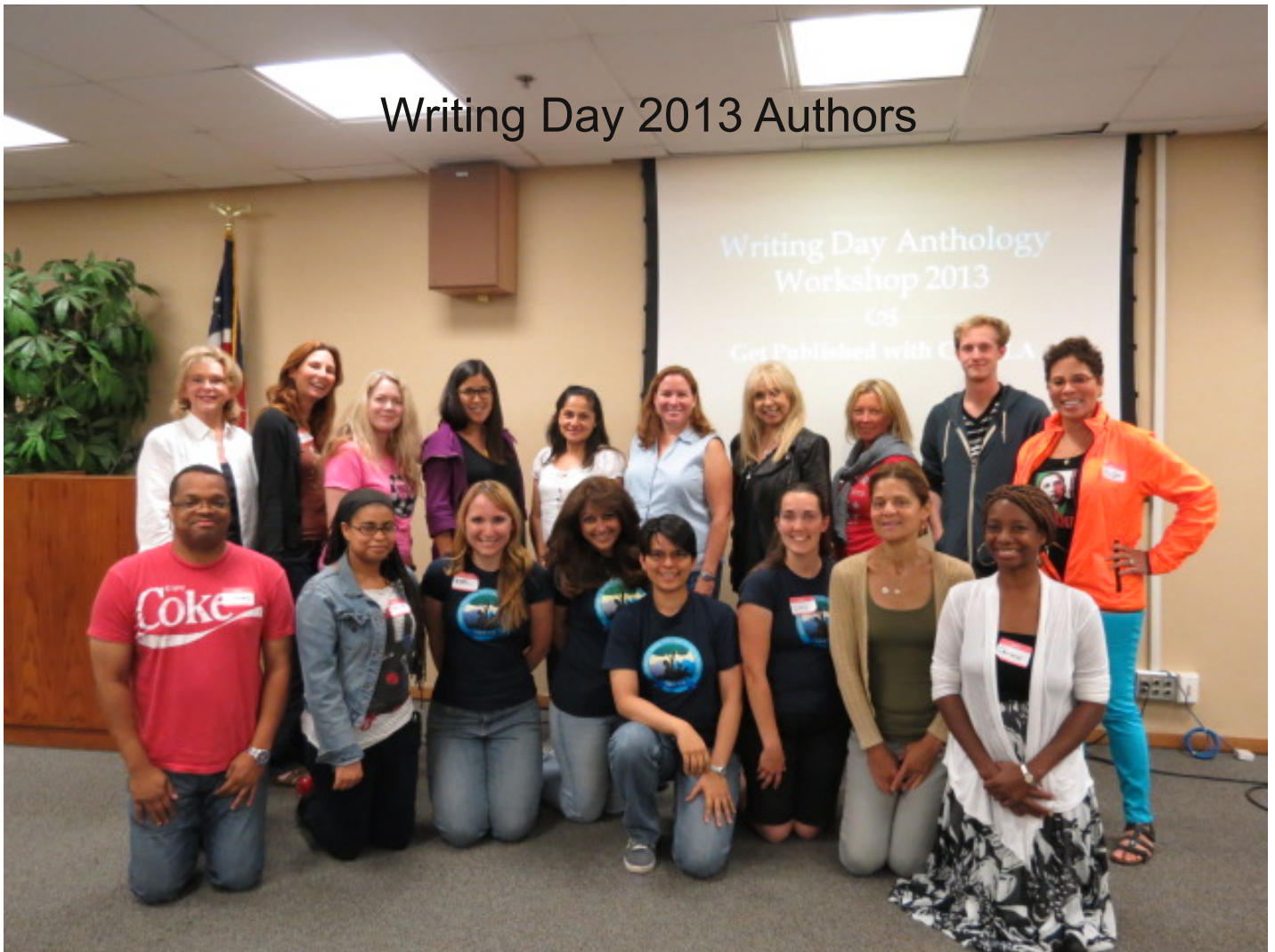


# Story Sprouts Book Launch Party 2013!





## Writing Day 2013 Authors



## Story Sprouts Blurbs 2013

Get a taste of the tales that grace  
the pages of Story Sprouts 2013

In "Sweet Tooth Aliens" by Abi Estrin, Sarah and her cat Ginger teach a bunch of candy-stealing aliens destroying the town how to share and mind their manners.

In "The Knife" by Lynne Southerland, a foster mother struggles with a little boy's realization that his life started out in very bad circumstances.

In her poem "Writing vs. Reading," Stacy Anderson examines the symbiotic relationship between readers and writers

in a lyrical, illustrative manner, marrying the two as lovers and dreamers.

In "The Conqueror" by Kristina F. Jordan, a young woman steals her employer's obsidian bracelet and travels to Greece to learn more about its beauty. Instead, she uncovers a powerful and surprising past life.

In "For Want of a Better Thing" by Glenn Jason Hanna, a little boy discovers the best way to appreciate food, family and friendship is a healthy balance after



errant wishes drive him to alternating manic and lazy reactions.

In "The Magic Pinwheel" by Tiffani Barth, Sam's Grandpa helps him stand up to bullies and learn to ride a bike with the help of a bright pink magical pinwheel.

In "The Pit" by Cacy Duncan, a young writer gives life to a sloshing creature rising from the quicksand of her imaginative mind.

In "The Spice Market" by Diane H. Fisk, a fair maiden is caught up in a lovers' quarrel between two vampires before she gets rescued by a prince.

In "Moved by the Muse," Angie Flores learns to turn off the wife and mother, break through pesky writer's block, and allow the stories to flow, just as her Grandmother had done years before.

In "A Week in the Life of an Honest Queen" by Lucy Ravitch, a secret fairy watches two young boys as they learn the difference between greed and fairness, tempted by the evil wizard, Mr. Dark.

In "Constant Companion," Donna Marie Robb recalls the importance of writing throughout her personal history, from fairy tales in the first grade to exotic novels today. She calls her life-long relationship with writing both fickle and blissful, feelings familiar to all writers.

In "The Unique Temptress in a Sea of Emotional Pollution" by Diane Sepulveda Robinson, a woman finds herself and throws off the chains from a lifetime of doubt in a most unlikely place – the back room of a crowded antique store.

In "Redemption" by Nora Rodriguez, a girl steals a gun from the town general store with plans to even the score with her tormenter. But something surprising stands in the way of her plans.

In "Melrose Avenue Blues" by Lissa Ross, a Los Angeles transplant starts work at a junk store on Melrose Avenue and falls into a whirlwind life taking her from mobster employee to legitimate actress.

In "Finding Inspiration at the Festival of Books," Christal Terry remembers why she fell in love with writing as she watches her seven-year-old son and nephew interact with a famous picture book author.

In "All in the Timing" by Kathryn Thornton, a mousy, timid high school girl goes behind her best friend's back to vie for Homecoming Queen.

In "Curse of Apollo" by Cameron Ulyate, the Greek god Apollo falls out of favor with Zeus and is left to answer hundreds of mortal questions, including, "What does it mean to be a writer?"

In "Story Gardener" by Nutschell Anne Windsor, a writing visionary plants her seed of ideas, waiting for a novel majestic tree with solid roots and bountiful fruit to grow. When a storm scatters her dreams, she must find a way to move forward and start anew.

In "Solitary Encounters," Alana Garrigues reflects on the mentors who guide her writing life: the authors who inspired her to take up the call of the pen, and the family and friends who encourage her to push on through the hurdles of a creative calling. She challenges writers to contemplate the silent cheerleaders and critics in their own lives who inspire them onward and upward.

# Writers' Support

If you are a member of CBW-LA, congratulations! You have already taken one huge step towards writing success. More than free critique sessions and discounts on workshops, professional writing organizations and their members experience a symbiotic relationship where education and community support are paramount. Here are a few reasons it pays off to join a professional writing organization.

## The Benefits of Joining a Professional Writing Organization

by Nutschell Anne Windsor

While some writers can pursue a career without being part of a professional writing organization, most will benefit from joining one.

I belong to two wonderful writing organizations: The Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators ([www.scbwi.org](http://www.scbwi.org)) and the Children's Book Writers of Los Angeles ([www.cbw-la.org](http://www.cbw-la.org)), which I founded in 2010.

Here are some of the benefits I see from being a member of both:

### 1. Networking

Networking is an important part of growing any business. And writing is a business. Gone are the days of hermit writers and hidden authors. Nowadays, with so many books vying for readers' attentions, the name of the game is exposure. Networking with fellow authors will give you the chance to increase your book's visibility. And if you aren't published yet, networking will open various opportunities for you. You might find critique partners through networking, or find a freelance editor or literary agent who will help you improve your craft. You might meet a blogger who will enthusiastically review your books or even help you set up your own website.

### 2. Career Opportunities

Joining a writing organization might also present you with opportunities to get published or expand your career options. You might impress a literary agent or editor during a workshop or conference and find yourself faced with an offer of representation or an offer of publication. Likewise, a writer you meet at a schmooze might invite you to be a speaker for their writing group.

### 3. Professional Development

Writing organizations often present workshops and conferences which feature industry professionals. This presents budding authors with an opportunity to learn from the best. Agents, editors and other authors have a host of knowledge and personal experience in publishing - gaining access to their stories will help writers improve their own craft. These industry professionals will not only share writing techniques, they'll also provide you with helpful tips on how to market your books and the inspiration to keep on writing.

Aside from workshops and conferences, writing organizations will also have other resources like newsletters, magazines, handbooks, and websites full of helpful links and insiders' information. You might also find online critique partners through your writing organization.

### 4. Recognition

Sometime writing organizations offer contests, scholarships, and awards. Your talent will be recognized by professionals if you win any one of these - recognition that will help open doors and push you further along on the road to publication. If you're already a published author, winning an award might help boost sales or make your next contract more lucrative.

Winning a contest might also provide you with an opportunity to attend a conference or workshop for free. The Los Angeles branch of the SCBWI, for example, offers the first place winners of their annual Writer's Day contest a chance to attend one of the three local events they hold each year, at no cost to the winner.

### 5. Support

Writing can be a lonely, and difficult, task. Having the support of fellow writers who understand the journey of composition will help you overcome many of the obstacles you'll encounter along the way. You'll also get great support in terms of legal and professional situations.

For instance, if you were offered a contract by a publisher, but you have no literary agent to help you look it over, your writing organization might provide you with a handbook, a set of guidelines or some helpful information to help you figure it out. They might also provide you with a directory of entertainment lawyers, and you can hire one of them to help negotiate a better publishing deal for you, or to help you out in case you get tangled in some legal situation.

Some writing organizations will also have member insurance policies or emergency funds to help members in times of need.



## 6. Publication

While schmoozing with agents, authors and editors might get your foot in the door, they don't necessarily lead to instant publication.

Some writing organizations, however, provide definite opportunities for you to get published in other ways. They might encourage submissions to their newsletters or magazines. Or they might even allow you an opportunity to get published in an anthology.

CBW-LA, for example, just began an annual tradition - the Writing Day Anthology Workshop in which participants are led through a series of writing exercises. By the end of the June 2013 workshop, each participant had produced and revised two pieces which were published four months later in *Story Sprouts*, published by CBW-LA Publications. The book is now sold worldwide on the Amazon platform.

So, don't hold back! Join a writing group now to take full advantage of these great opportunities. And remember, the more members who pay dues and attend events, the more wonderful programming non-profit writing organizations can provide.

We wish to thank all of our members, event attendees and guest speakers for your support. As we continue to grow, we reflect on all that you have made possible these past four years. After more than 50 workshops and critique sessions, we are confident that this group has provided a high caliber of educational resources to the community, and we are proud of the future yet to unfold.

### Brain Booster

Exercise your mind with our quarterly brain booster writing prompt!

In this issue, we want to highlight the vast array of stories born out of the same words. Every writer has their own voice - uniquely personal.

This month, we invite you to create a short story or vignette, totaling 100-250 words. You must include the following five words in your story:

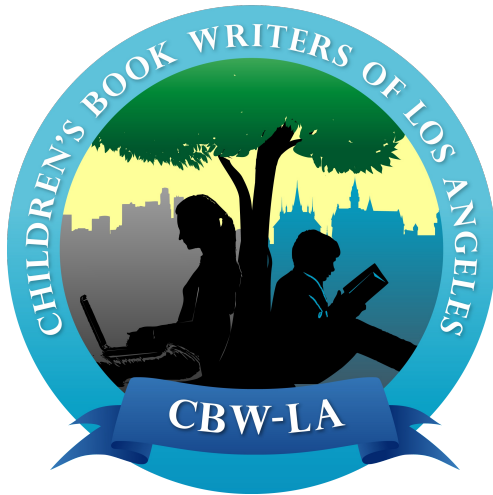
fingerprint, lemon, snowflake, twin, wise

We want to see the result! Please send your story to: [alana@cbw-la.org](mailto:alana@cbw-la.org) with the subject: "Five Word Brain Booster" no later than Wednesday, April 16, to share in the next issue of *Scribblers' Scoop*. We would love to see all your different voices and stories shine through on the pages of our newsletter!

If you have an idea for a future Brain Booster, please email [alana@cbw-la.org](mailto:alana@cbw-la.org).

## About CBW-LA

Children's Book Writers of Los Angeles, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, provides education and inspiration for published writers and writers on the road to publication. We offer a venue to share knowledge and information between writers, illustrators, members of the publishing industry, booksellers, educators, librarians and other members of the community who wish to be involved in promoting children's literature and literacy for children.



## Group Reviews

"CBW-LA is an incredibly helpful organization that addresses the many issues that are critical to writers. Meetings, speakers and workshops offer amazing information!" – D.A. Anton

"Ms. Windsor impressed me highly. She is without a doubt one of the most professional persons I have have had the pleasure of meeting. An obvious expert in her area, she has domain of literary jargon, and an editor's eye for detail and improvement on her delivery of a critique. She makes the uncomfortable heat, inconvenient distance, and traffic battle very worth ones' while." – L. Donovan

"An excellent resource for writers of all kind." – A. Flores

"Very professional and friendly people! Well put together!" – Lisa

## CBW-LA Membership

Becoming a member is easy!

Fill out a membership form:

<http://www.cbw-la.org/Resources/Documents/CBWLAMembershipFormNew.pdf>

Sign Up Today! Mail the membership form and payment to: P.O. Box 4376  
Torrance, CA 90510 or sign up online at [cbw-la.org](http://cbw-la.org).

Already a member? Don't let your membership lapse! Check your membership records at [cbw-la.org](http://cbw-la.org) to see if your membership is up for renewal!

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Nutschell Anne Windsor  
nutschell@cbw-la.org

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Lucy Ravitch  
lucy@cbw-la.org

### TREASURER

Tiffani Barth  
tiffani@cbw-la.org

### PUBLICATIONS EDITOR

Alana Garrigues  
alana@cbw-la.org

### MARKETING MANAGER

Angie Flores - angie@cbw-la.org

### PUBLICITY & SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

Sibylla Nash - sibylla@cbw-la.org

## ADDRESS

CBW-LA  
P.O. Box 4376  
Torrance, CA 90510

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Do you have a story that you think our CBW-LA Members would appreciate? Are you a cartoonist, illustrator or photographer with a flair for covering kid lit and writing topics? Pitch us! Unfortunately, we cannot pay our writers, but your name will be listed on our website and your story will reach hundreds of local writers just like you. We would also be happy to provide a testimonial or reference for a job well done!

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Our club runs on volunteers, and we need your help!

Please contact [cbwla2012@gmail.com](mailto:cbwla2012@gmail.com) if you are interested in any of the following volunteer positions, and we'll put you in touch with the right board member!

- Event Set-Up / Clean-Up
- Fundraising
- Graphic Design
- Newsletter Ad Sales
- Photography
- Social Media Team
- Videography

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Get online with CBW-LA!

Become our fan or follower, and engage in a social media driven dialogue.

Blog: <http://www.cbw-la.org/blog>

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CBWLA](http://www.facebook.com/CBWLA)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/CBWLA](http://www.twitter.com/CBWLA)

Plus, members can use the forums in our members-only section on [www.cbw-la.org](http://www.cbw-la.org) to chat about anything that interests you!

Use #CBWLA to follow the conversation across social media at Tagboard: [www.tagboard/CBWLA](http://www.tagboard/CBWLA)

Coming soon to Pinterest and Goodreads!